Hosea
הושע
merged
https://www.sefaria.org/Hosea
This file contains merged sections from the following text versions:
-THE JPS TANAKH: Gender-Sensitive Edition
-https://jps.org/books/the-jps-tanakh-gender-sensitive-edition/

Hosea

Chapter 1

The word of G OD that came to Hosea son of Beeri, in the reigns of Kings Uzziah, Jotham, Ahaz, and Hezekiah of Judah, and in the reign of King Jeroboam son of Joash of Israel.
When G OD first spoke to Hosea, G OD said to Hosea, "Go, get yourself a wife of whoredom and children of whoredom; for the land will stray a stray Lit. "whore away." from following G OD." b a wife of whoredom and children of whoredom; for the land will stray from following G OD Force of Heb. uncertain.
So he went and married Gomer daughter of Diblaim. She conceived and bore him a son,
and G OD instructed him, "Name him Jezreel; for, I will soon punish the House of Jehu c Jehu Emendation yields "Israel"; cf. next note. for the bloody deeds at Jezreel d bloody deeds at Jezreel See 1 Kings 21.1–24; 2 Kings 9.21–35. Emendation yields "the Baal days"; cf. 2.15. and put an end to the monarchy of the House of Israel.
In that day, I will break the bow of Israel in the Valley of Jezreel."
She conceived again and bore a daughter; and he was told, "Name her Lo-ruhamah; e Lo-ruhamah I.e., "Not-accepted" or "Unpitied"; cf. 2.3, 6, 25. for I will no longer accept the House of Israel or pardon them. f or pardon them Meaning of Heb. uncertain; emendation yields "but will disown them"; cf. 9.15 and elsewhere.
(But I will accept the House of Judah. And I will give them victory through the E TERNAL their God; I will not give them victory with bow and sword and battle, by horses and riders.)"
After weaning Lo-ruhamah, she conceived and bore a son.
Then [God] said, "Name him Lo-ammi; g Lo-ammi I.e., "Not-My-People." for you h you I.e., you and your fellow countrymen. are not My people, and I will not be your [God]." i I will not be your [God] Cf. 2.25.

Chapter 2

a Vv. 1–3 anticipate the conclusion of the chapter. The number of the people of Israel shall be like that of the sands of the sea, which cannot be measured or counted; and instead of being told, "You are Not-My-People," b You are Not-My-People See 1.9. they shall be called Children-of-the-Living-God.
The people of Judah and the people of Israel shall assemble together and appoint one head over them; and they shall rise from the ground c from the ground Meaning, perhaps, "from their wretched condition," or "to ascendancy over the land." —for marvelous shall be the day of Jezreel! d the day of Jezreel I.e., the day when the name Jezreel will convey a promise (2.23–25) instead of a threat (1.4–5).
Oh, call e call G OD addresses Hosea and his fellow North Israelites; see 1.9. The mother is the nation; her children the individual North Israelites. your brothers "My People," And your sisters "Lovingly Accepted!"

f See preceding note. In this passage, G OD speaks as if in a family quarrel, or in a court of law. Remonstrate your mother, remonstrate her—
For she is not My wife And I am not her husband g she is not My wife / And I am not her husband A declaration of divorce. — And let her put away her whoredom from her face And her adultery from between her breasts.
Else will I strip her naked And leave her as on the day she was born: And I will make her like a wilderness, Render her like desert land, And let her die of thirst.
I will also disown her children; For they are now a whore's brood,
In that their mother has played the whore, She that conceived them has acted shamelessly— Because she thought, "I will go after my lovers, Who supply my bread and my water, My wool and my linen, My oil and my drink."
Assuredly, I will hedge up her h her Heb. "your." Vv. 8–9 would read well after v. 15. roads with thorns And raise walls against her, And she shall not find her paths.
Pursue her lovers as she will, She shall not overtake them; And seek them as she may, She shall never find them. Then she will say, "I will go and return To my first husband, For then I fared better than now."
And she did not consider this: It was I who bestowed on her The new grain and wine and oil; I who lavished silver on her And gold—which they used for Baal.
Assuredly, I will take back My new grain in its time And My new wine in its season, And I will snatch away My wool and My linen That serve to cover her nakedness.
Now will I uncover her shame In the very sight of her lovers, And not one of them shall save her from Me.
And I will end all her rejoicing: Her festivals, new moons, and sabbaths—All her festive seasons.
I will lay waste her vines and her fig trees, Which she thinks are a fee She received from her lovers; I will turn them into brushwood, And beasts of the field shall devour them.
Thus will I punish her For the days of the Baalim, On which she brought them offerings; When, decked with earrings and jewels, She would go after her lovers, Forgetting Me —declares G OD.
Assuredly, I will speak coaxingly to her And lead her through the wilderness i wilderness I.e., her ravaged land (see vv. 5, 10–11, 14); so Ibn Ezra. And speak to her tenderly.
I will give her her vineyards from there, And the Valley of Achor j Valley of Achor A desolate region; cf. Isa. 65.10; see further Josh. 7.25–26. as a plowland of hope. k plowland of hope Connecting pethaḥ with pittaḥ "to plow" (see Isa. 28.24). Meaning of Heb. uncertain; in contrast to others "door of hope." There she shall respond as in the days of her youth, When she came up from the land of Egypt.
And in that day —declares G OD — You will call [Me] Ishi, l Ishi I.e., "my husband." And no more will you call Me Baali. m Baali Like Ishi, Baali means "my husband," but it also means "my Baal."
For I will remove the names of the Baalim from her mouth, And they shall nevermore be mentioned by name.
In that day, I will make a covenant for them with the beasts of the field, the birds of the air, and the creeping things of the ground; I will also banish n banish Lit. "break." bow, sword, and war from the land. Thus I will let them lie down in safety.
And I will espouse you forever: I will espouse you with righteousness and justice, And with goodness and mercy,
And I will espouse you with faithfulness; o with righteousness and justice,…with goodness and mercy,…with faithfulness As the bride-price to be paid upon marriage, the bridegroom (G OD) will confer these qualities on the bride (the people of Israel), which she had lacked during their first marriage, so that their second one will last forever. Then you shall be devoted to G OD.

In that day, I will respond —declares G OD — I will respond to the sky,
And it shall respond to the earth;
And the earth shall respond With new grain and wine and oil, And they shall respond to Jezreel. p Jezreel I.e., “God sows.” The names of Hosea’s children (1.3–8) are applied here to Israel.
I will sow her in the land as My own; And take Lo-ruhamah back in favor;
And I will say to Lo-ammi, “You are My people,” And he will respond, “[You are] my God.”

Chapter 3

G OD
 said to me further, “Go, befriend a woman who, while befriended a befriend…befriended For this sense, see Deut. 10.19. by a companion, consorts with others, just as G OD befriends the Israelites, b just as G OD befriends the Israelites See Hos. 2.10. but they turn to other gods and love the cups of the grape.” c to other gods and love the cups of the grape Meaning of Heb. uncertain; emendation yields “‘to other gods.’ And so I befriended a woman of lust.”
Then I hired her for fifteen [shekels of] silver, a ḥomer of barley, and a lethech of barley; d a lethech of barley Septuagint reads “a jar of wine.”
and I stipulated with her, “In return, e In return Lit. “for me.” you are to go a long time without either fornicating or marrying; even I [shall not cohabit] with you.”
For the Israelites shall go a long time without king and without officials, without sacrifice f sacrifice Emendation yields “altar.” and without cult pillars, and without ephod and oracle idols.
Afterward, the Israelites will turn back and will seek the E TERNAL their God and David their king—and they will thrill over G OD and over God’s bounty in the days to come.

Chapter 4

Hear the word of G OD, O people of Israel! For G OD has a case Against the inhabitants of this land, Because there is no honesty and no goodness And no devotion to God in the land.
[False] swearing, dishonesty, and murder, And theft and adultery are rife; Crime follows upon crime!
For that, the earth is withered: Everything that dwells on it languishes— Beasts of the field and birds of the sky— Even the fish of the sea perish.
“Absolutely no one shall rebuke; none shall protest!” For this, your people has a grievance against [you], O priest! a For this, your people has a grievance against [you], O priest! For failing to reprove; but meaning of Heb. uncertain.
So you shall stumble by day, And by night a prophet b a prophet Emendation yields “your children”; cf. v. 6 end. shall stumble as well, And I will destroy your kindred. c kindred Lit. “mother.”
My people is destroyed for the lack of devotion! Because you have rejected devotion, I reject you as My priest; Because you have spurned the teaching of your God, I, in turn, will spurn your children.
The more they increased, the more they sinned against Me: I will change their dignity to dishonor.
They feed on My people’s purgation offerings, And so they desire its iniquity.
Therefore, the people shall fare like the priests: I will punish it for its conduct, I will requite it for its deeds.

Truly, they shall eat, but not be sated; They shall swill, d swill For this meaning of hiznah cf. v. 18. but not be satisfied, Because they have forsaken G OD To practice e practice Cf. 12.7.
lechery. Wine f Wine Emendation yields “New grain”; cf. 7.14; 9.1–2. and new wine destroy The mind of
My people: It consults its stick, g stick I.e., its phallus, meaning “its lust.” Its rod h rod I.e., its phallus, meaning “its lust.” directs it! A lecherous impulse has made them go wrong, And they have strayed i strayed See note at 1.2. from submission to their God.
They sacrifice on the mountaintops And offer on the hills, Under oaks, poplars, and terebinths Whose shade is so pleasant. That is why their j their Heb. “your,” here and through v. 14. daughters fornicate And their daughters-in-law commit adultery!
I will not punish their daughters for fornicating Nor their daughters-in-law for committing adultery; For they themselves turn aside k turn aside Meaning of Heb. uncertain. with whores And sacrifice with female consecrated workers, l female consecrated workers Or “female retainers”; meaning of Heb. qedeshot uncertain. And a people that is without sense m without sense Cf. vv. 11–12. must stumble.
If you are a lecher, Israel— Let not Judah incur guilt— Do not come to Gilgal, n Do not come to Gilgal One who participates in the debaucheries of the open-air shrines is not fit to visit a temple building. Do not make pilgrimages to Beth-aven, o Beth-aven Lit. “House of Delusion,” substituted for Bethel (cf. Amos 4.4). And do not swear by G OD! p do not swear by G OD I.e., you are not fit to profess this religion; see Jer. 12.16.
Ah, Israel has balked Like a stubborn cow; Therefore,
G OD
will graze him On the range, like a sheep. q graze him / On the range, like a sheep Instead of giving them fodder in return for their work; cf. Isa. 30.23–24.
r Meaning of vv. 17–19 uncertain in part. Ephraim is addicted to images—
Let him be.
They drink to excess— Their liquor turns against them. They “love” beyond measure— Disgrace is the “gift”
That the wind is bringing; s is bringing Lit. “has bound up in the corners of its garment”; see note at Mal. 3.20. They shall garner shame from their sacrifices.

Chapter 5

Hear this, O priests, Attend, O House a House Emendation yields “prophets.” of Israel, And give ear, O royal house; For right conduct is your responsibility! But you b For right conduct is your responsibility! / But you Or “This verdict pertains to you. / You.” have been a snare to Mizpah And a net spread out over Tabor;
c Meaning of verse uncertain. For when trappers dug deep pitfalls, I was the only reprover of them all.
Yes, I have watched Ephraim, Israel has not escaped my notice: Behold, you have fornicated, O Ephraim; Israel has defiled himself!
Their habits do not let them Turn back to their God; Because of the lecherous impulse within them, They pay no heed to G OD.
Israel’s pride shall be humbled before his very eyes, As Israel and Ephraim fall because of their sin (And Judah falls with them).
Then they will go with their sheep and cattle To seek G OD —whom they will not find. d Israel’s pride … will not find This passage would read well after 5.15; cf. 5.6 with 6.6. They have been cast off: e They have been cast off Meaning of Heb. uncertain.
[Because] they have broken faith with G OD, Because they have f they have Emendation yields “[God] has.” begotten Alien children. Therefore, the

new moon Shall devour their portion. g Therefore, the new moon / Shall devour their portion Meaning of Heb. uncertain.
Sound a ram’s horn in Gibeah, A trumpet in Ramah; Give the alarm in Beth-aven; h Gibeah…Ramah…Beth-aven The three towns named, in the territory of Benjamin, are now being wrested from Israel by Judah; see v. 10. On the latter town’s name, see second note at 4.15. After you, i After you Emendation yields “Stir up.” Benjamin!
Ephraim is stricken with horror On a day of chastisement. Against the tribes j tribes I.e., the kingdoms of Judah and Israel (represented by Ephraim). of Israel I proclaim certainties:
The officers of Judah have acted Like shifters of field boundaries; On them I will pour out My wrath like water.
Ephraim is defrauded, Robbed of redress, Because he has witlessly Gone after futility. k futility Cf. Targum and Septuagint; but meaning of Heb. uncertain.
For it is I who am like rot to Ephraim, Like decay to the House of Judah; l Judah Emendation yields “Israel.”
Yet when Ephraim became aware of his sickness, Judah m Judah See note at v. 12. of his sores, Ephraim repaired to Assyria— He sent envoys to a patron n patron Compare the verb ryb in the sense of “to champion, uphold the cause of,” in Isa. 1.17; 3.13; 19.20 end; 51.22. king! He will never be able to cure you, Will not heal you of your sores.
No, I will be like a lion to Ephraim, Like a great beast to the House of Judah; o Judah See note at v. 12. I, I will attack and stride away, Carrying the prey that no one can rescue;
And I will return to My abode— Till they realize their guilt. In their distress, they will seek Me And beg for My favor.

Chapter 6

a As anticipated at the end of chapter 5, Israel seeks G OD ’s favor; the answer begins with v. 4. “Come, let us turn back to G OD : The One who attacked, and so can heal us; Who wounded, and so can bind us up.
In two days [God] will make us whole again, And on the third day raise us up; God’s favor will make us whole.
Let us pursue devotion to G OD, And we shall become devout. As sure as daybreak is God’s appearance, Which will come to us like rain, Like latter rain that refreshes b refreshes Taking yoreh as equivalent of yarweh. the earth.”
What can I do for you, Ephraim, What can I do for you, Judah, c Judah Emendation yields “Israel”; cf. “Ephraim…Israel” in v. 10. When your goodness is like morning clouds, Like dew so early gone?
That is why I have hewn down the prophets, d the prophets Emendation yields “your children”; cf. 9.13. Have slain them with the words of My mouth: And the day that dawned [brought on] your punishment. e And the day that dawned [brought on] your punishment Cf. v. 3; but meaning of Heb. uncertain.
For I desire goodness, not sacrifice; Devotion to God, rather than burnt offerings.
f Meaning of vv. 7–11 unclear in part. But they, as human beings [are wont to do], g human beings [are wont to do] Or “at Adam,” a town in central Transjordan; cf. Josh. 3.16. have transgressed the Covenant. This is where they have been false to Me:
Gilead is a city of evildoers, Tracked up with blood.
The gang of priests is Like the ambuscade of bandits Who murder on the road to Shechem, For they have encouraged h encouraged Heb. “done”; cf. 5.1–3. depravity.
In the House of Israel i the House of Israel Emendation yields “Beth-shean.” I have seen A horrible thing; Ephraim has fornicated there, Israel has defiled himself.

(Even Judah has reaped a harvest of you!) j (Even Judah has reaped a harvest of you!) Cf. 5.9–10; but meaning of clause uncertain. When I would restore My people’s fortunes,

Chapter 7

When I would heal Israel, The guilt of Ephraim reveals itself And the wickedness of Samaria. For they have acted treacherously, With thieves breaking in And bands raiding outside.
And they do not consider That I remembered all their wickedness. Why, their misdeeds have been all around them, a them Emendation yields “Me.” They have been ever before Me.
b Vv. 3–6 would read well in the order 4, 6, 3, 5. In malice they make a king merry, And officials in treachery.
They commit adultery, c commit adultery Emendation yields “rage.” all of them, Like an oven fired by a baker, Who desists from stoking only From the kneading of the dough to its leavening.
The day they made our king sick [And] officials with the poison of wine, He gave his hand to traitors. d He gave his hand to traitors I.e., he trusted traitors; but meaning of verse uncertain.
For they approach their ambush With their hearts like an oven: e For they approach … like an oven Meaning of Heb. uncertain. Through the night Their baker f baker Emendation yields “rage.” has slept; In the morning, it flares up Like a blazing fire.
They all get heated like an oven And devour their rulers— None of them calls to Me. All their kings have fallen [by their hand].
g Meaning of verse uncertain. Ephraim is among the peoples; He is rotting away. Ephraim is like a cake— Incapable of turning.
Strangers have consumed his strength, But he has taken no notice; Also, mold h mold Like Akkadian shību ; in contrast to others “gray hairs.” is scattered over him, But he has taken no notice.
Though Israel’s pride has been humbled Before his very eyes, They have not turned back To their God the E TERNAL One— Whom they have not sought Despite everything.
Instead, Ephraim has acted Like a silly dove with no mind: They have appealed to Egypt! They have gone to Assyria!
When they go, I will spread My net over them, I will bring them down Like birds of the sky; I will chastise them When I hear their bargaining. i I will chastise them / When I hear their bargaining Meaning of Heb. uncertain.
Woe to them For straying from Me; Destruction to them For rebelling against Me! For I was their Redeemer; Yet they have plotted treason against Me.
j This verse would read well after 8.2. But they did not cry out to Me sincerely As they lay wailing. k lay wailing Like true penitents; cf. Isa. 58.5. They debauch l debauch Cf. Aramaic gar / yegur “to commit adultery”; for the thought, cf. 4.11. over new grain and new wine, They are faithless m faithless Taking yasuru as equivalent to yasoru, from sarar ; cf. 9.15 end. to Me.
I braced, I strengthened their arms, And they plot evil against Me!
They come back; They have been of no use, n They have been of no use Meaning of Heb. uncertain. Like a slack bow. Their officers shall fall by the sword, Because of the stammering o stammering Cf. Arabic zaghūm and zughmūm “a stammerer.” of their tongues. Such shall be [the results of] their jabbering p jabbering I.e., the negotiations conducted in the Egyptian language. In the land of Egypt.

Chapter 8

[Put] a ram’s horn to your mouth— Like an eagle a Like an eagle Meaning of Heb. uncertain. over the House of G OD ; b G OD Emendation yields “Israel.” Because they have transgressed My covenant And been faithless to My teaching.
Israel cries out to Me, “O my God, we are devoted to You.” c Following this verse, 7.14 would read well.
Israel rejects what is good; An enemy shall pursue him. d An enemy shall pursue him Emendation yields “They pursue delusion.”
They have made kings, But not with My sanction; They have made officers, But not of My choice. Of their silver and gold They have made themselves images, To their own undoing.
I reject e I reject Heb. “He rejects.” your calf, Samaria! I am furious with them! Will they never be capable of purity?
For it was Israel’s doing; f purity? / For it was Israel’s doing Emendation yields “understanding, / That House of Israel?” It was only made by a joiner, It is not a god. No, the calf of Samaria shall be Reduced to splinters!
They sow wind, And they shall reap whirlwind— Standing stalks devoid of ears And yielding no flour. If they do yield any, Strangers shall devour it.
Israel is bewildered; g bewildered A play on words: The Heb. verb bala‘, which means “bewildered” here (cf. Isa. 28.7), is a homonym of the verb that means “devour” in the preceding verse. They have now become among the nations Like an unwanted vessel,
[Like] a lonely wild ass. For they have gone up to Assyria, Ephraim has h Ephraim has Emendation yields “In Egypt they have.” courted friendship.
And while they are courting among the nations, There I will hold them fast; i There I will hold them fast Cf. 9.6; but meaning of Heb. uncertain. And they shall begin to diminish in number From the burden of king [and] officers. j And they shall begin … officers Meaning of Heb. uncertain.
For Ephraim has multiplied altars—for guilt; His altars have redounded to his guilt:
The many teachings I wrote for him Have been treated as something alien.
When they present sacrifices to Me, k When they present sacrifices to Me Meaning of Heb. uncertain. It is but flesh for them to eat:
G OD
has not accepted them. Behold, their iniquities will be remembered, Their sins will be punished: Back to Egypt with them!
Israel has ignored his Maker And built temples (And Judah has fortified many cities). So I will set fire to his cities, And it shall consume their fortresses.

Chapter 9

Rejoice not, O Israel, As other peoples exult; For you have strayed Away from your God: You have loved a prostitute’s fee By every threshing floor of new grain.
Threshing floor and winepress Shall not join them, And the new wine shall betray her. a You have loved a prostitute’s fee / By every threshing floor of new grain. / Threshing floor and winepress / Shall not join them, / And the new wine shall betray her Emendation and rearrangement yield: “You have loved fornication / By every threshing floor and press; / The new grain shall not join them, / And the new wine shall fail them.”
They shall not be able to remain In G OD ’s land. But Ephraim shall return to Egypt And shall eat impure food in Assyria. b eat impure food in Assyria The lands of the heathen and the food there are impure; cf. Ezek. 4.13; Amos 7.17.
It shall be for them like the food of mourners, All who partake of which are defiled. They will offer no libations of wine to G OD, And no

sacrifices of theirs will please; But their food will be only for their hunger, It shall not come into the House of G OD.
What will you do about feast days, About the festivals of G OD?
Behold, they have gone from destruction c from destruction Emendation yields "to Assyria." [With] the silver they treasure. Egypt shall hold them fast, d hold them fast Cf. 8.10. Moph e Moph Believed to be Memphis, elsewhere called Noph. shall receive them in burial. Weeds are their heirs; Prickly shrubs occupy their [old] homes.
The days of punishment have come For your heavy guilt; The days of requital have come— Let Israel know it! The prophet was distraught, The inspired man driven mad By constant harassment.
Ephraim watches for my God. As for the prophet, f my God. / As for the prophet Emendation yields "the prophet of my God." Fowlers' snares are on all his paths, Harassment in the House of his God.
They have been as grievously corrupt As in the days of Gibeah; g the days of Gibeah See Judg. 19–20. [God] will remember their iniquity, And will punish their sins.
I found Israel [as pleasing] As grapes in the wilderness; Your ancestors seemed to Me Like the first fig to ripen on a fig tree. h Like the first fig to ripen on a fig tree Emendation yields "like a ripe fig in a waterless waste"; cf. 13.5. But when they came to Baal-peor, They turned aside to shamefulness; i shamefulness Cf. Num. 25.1–3. Then they became as detested As they had been loved. j Then they became … loved Meaning of Heb. uncertain.
From birth, from the womb, from conception Ephraim's glory shall be Like birds that fly away. k V. 16 would read well after this verse.
Even if they rear their infants, I will bereave them of everyone. Woe to them indeed When I turn away from them! l Woe to them indeed / When I turn away from them! Emendation yields: "Even if they wean their babes, / They shall be dismayed because of them."
It shall go with Ephraim As I have seen it go with Tyre, Which was planted in a meadow; m It shall go … in a meadow Meaning of Heb. uncertain. Ephraim too must bring out His children to slayers.
Give them, O E TERNAL One—give them what? Give them a womb that miscarries, And shriveled breasts!
All their misfortune [began] at Gilgal, For there I disowned them. n them The specific allusion is uncertain. For their evil deeds I will drive them out of My House. I will accept them no more; All their officials are o All their officials are Emendation yields "They are all." disloyal.
Ephraim p Ephraim Targum reads "Their crown," i.e., of a tree. is stricken, Their stock is withered; They can produce no fruit. Even if they do bear children, I will slay their cherished offspring.
My God rejects them Because they have not obeyed, And they shall go wandering Among the nations.

Chapter 10

Israel is a ravaged vine And its fruit is like it. When his fruit was plentiful, He made altars aplenty; When his land was bountiful, Cult pillars abounded.
Now that his boughs a boughs Cf. 2 Sam. 18.14, where the word is rendered "thick growth." are broken up, He feels his guilt; He himself pulls apart his altars, Smashes his pillars.
Truly, now they say, "We have no king; For, since we do not fear G OD, What can a king do to us?"
So they conclude agreements and make covenants With false oaths, And justice degenerates into poison weeds, Breaking out b degenerates into poison weeds, / Breaking out Cf. Amos 6.12; lit. "breaks out like poison weeds." on the furrows of the fields.

The inhabitants of Samaria fear For the calf of Beth-aven; c Beth-aven See the second note at 4.15. Indeed, its people and priestlings, Whose joy it once was, d Whose joy it once was Meaning of Heb. uncertain. Mourn over it for the glory That is departed from it.
It too shall be brought to Assyria As tribute to a patron e patron See the second note at 5.13. king; Ephraim shall be chagrined, Israel shall be dismayed Because of his plans. f plans Emendation yields "image," referring to the calf.
Samaria's monarchy g monarchy The Heb. verb agrees with this word, not with "Samaria." is vanishing Like foam upon water,
Ruined shall be the shrines of [Beth-]aven, h [Beth-]aven See the second note at 4.15. That sin of Israel. Thorns and thistles Shall grow on their altars. They shall call to the mountains, "Bury us!" To the hills, "Fall on us!"
You have sinned more, O Israel, Than in the days of Gibeah. i the days of Gibeah See note at 9.9. There they stand [as] at Gibeah! Shall they not be overtaken By a war upon scoundrels
As peoples gather against them? j There they stand … gather against them Meaning of Heb. uncertain. When I chose [them], I broke them in, Harnessing them for two furrows.
Ephraim became a trained heifer, But preferred to thresh; I placed a yoke Upon her sleek neck. k placed a yoke / Upon her sleek neck Lit. "passed over the comeliness of its neck." I will make Ephraim do advance plowing; l do advance plowing Taking rkb in the sense of the Arabic krb. Judah m Judah Emendation yields "Israel." shall do [main] plowing! Jacob shall do final plowing!
"Sow righteousness for yourselves; Reap the fruits of n the fruits of Lit. "according to." goodness; Break for yourselves betimes fresh ground Of seeking G OD, So that you may obtain a teacher o a teacher Meaning of Heb. uncertain; Septuagint reads "the fruits." of righteousness."
You have plowed wickedness, You have reaped iniquity— [And] you shall eat the fruits of treachery— Because you relied on your way, p way Septuagint reads "chariots." On your host of warriors.
But the din of war shall arise in your own people, And all your fortresses shall be ravaged As Beth-arbel was ravaged by Shalman q Shalman Perhaps identical with the Shallum of 2 Kings 15.10ff.; cf. the atrocities of Shallum's rival in 15.16. On a day of battle, When mothers and babes were dashed to death together.
This is what Bethel has done to you r is what Bethel has done to you Emendation yields "will I do to you, O House of Israel." For your horrible wickedness: At dawn s At dawn Meaning, perhaps, "swiftly as the dawn"; cf. v. 7 above, "like foam upon water." shall Israel's monarchy Utterly perish.

Chapter 11

I fell in love with Israel When he was still a child; And I have called [him] My son Ever since Egypt.
a Meaning of parts of vv. 2–7 uncertain. Thus were they called, But they went their own way; They sacrifice to Baalim b Baalim Emendation yields "calves"; cf. 8.4–6; 13.2. And offer to carved images.
I have pampered Ephraim, Taking them in My c My Heb. "his." arms; d pampered Ephraim, / Taking them in My arms; Or "taught Ephraim to walk, / Taking him by his arms." But they have ignored My healing care.
I drew them with human ties, e human ties Perhaps the ropes with which parents gently teach their children to walk; cf. Rashi, Kimhi. With cords of love; But I seemed to them as one Who imposed a yoke on their jaws, Though I was offering them food. f But I seemed to them as one / Who imposed a yoke on their jaws, / Though I was offering them food. Or "I

became to them like those / Who lift the harness from their mouths, / And I stooped and fed them.”
No! They return to the land of Egypt, And Assyria is their king. Because they refuse to repent,
A sword shall descend upon their towns g towns Emendation yields “bodies,” lit. “skins”; cf. Job 18.13. And consume their limbs And devour [them] because of their designs. h [them] because of their designs Emendation yields “their bones.”
For My people persists In its defection from Me; When it is summoned upward, It does not rise at all. i For My people … rise at all Meaning of Heb. uncertain.
How can I give you up, O Ephraim? How surrender you, O Israel? How can I make you like Admah, Render you like Zeboiim? j Admah…Zeboiim Towns that were destroyed along with neighboring Sodom and Gomorrah; cf. Gen. 10.19; 14.2, 8; Deut. 29.22. I have had a change of heart, All My tenderness is stirred.
I will not act on My wrath, Will not turn to destroy Ephraim. For I am God—not human— The Holy One in your midst: I will not come in fury. k The Holy One … in fury Meaning of Heb. uncertain.
G OD
will roar like a lion— Whom they shall march behind; With that roar, God’s children shall come Fluttering out of the west.
They shall flutter from Egypt like sparrows, From the land of Assyria like doves; And I will settle them in their homes —declares G OD.

Chapter 12

Ephraim surrounds Me with deceit, The House of Israel with guile. a surrounds Me … with guile I.e., the deceit and guile that they practice on each other (below vv. 8–9) is constantly noted by G OD. (But Judah stands firm with God And is faithful to the Holy One.) b (But Judah … the Holy One.) Meaning of Heb. uncertain.
Ephraim tends the wind And pursues the gale; He is forever adding Illusion to calamity. c calamity Septuagint reads “futility.” Now they make a covenant with Assyria, Now oil is carried to Egypt. d Now they make a covenant with Assyria / Now oil is carried to Egypt I.e., they foolishly depend on alliances instead of on G OD ; cf. 5.13; 7.10–11.
G OD once indicted Judah, e Judah Presumably the patriarch Judah. Emendation would yield “Israel”; cf. next note. And punished Jacob for his conduct, Requited him for his deeds.
In the womb he tried to supplant his brother; Grown to manhood, he strove with a divine being, f Cf. Gen. 25.26; 32.29.
He strove with an angel and prevailed— The other had to weep and implore him. At Bethel [Jacob] would meet him, There to commune with him. g him Heb. “us.”
Yet the E TERNAL, the God of Hosts, Must be invoked as “ G OD.” h as “G OD ” I.e., one should not invoke any of the angelic hosts.
You must return to your God! Practice goodness and justice, And constantly trust in your God.
A trader who uses false balances, Who loves to overreach,
Ephraim thinks, “Ah, I have become rich; I have gotten power! All my gains do not amount To an offense that is real guilt.” i All my gains … real guilt Meaning of Heb. uncertain.
I the E TERNAL have been your God Ever since the land of Egypt. I will let you dwell in your tents j in your tents I.e., securely; see 2 Kings 13.5. again As in the days of old, k old Lit. “a fixed season.”
When I spoke to the prophets; For I granted many visions, And spoke parables through the prophets.
As for Gilead, it is worthless; And to no purpose l And spoke parables … no purpose Meaning of Heb. uncertain. have they Been sacrificing oxen in

Gilgal: The altars of these are also Like stone heaps upon a plowed field. m Like stone heaps upon a plowed field I.e., the cults of Gilead and Gilgal are as worthless as that of Bethel.
Then Jacob had to flee n had to flee This is the punishment mentioned in v. 3. to the land of Aram; There Israel served for a wife, For a wife he had to guard [sheep].
But when G OD Brought Israel up from Egypt, It was through a prophet; o through a prophet I.e., not through an angel. Through a prophet p Through a prophet See previous note. they were guarded.
q Meaning of this verse and the next uncertain. Ephraim gave bitter offense, And his Lord cast his crimes upon him And requited him for his mockery.

Chapter 13

When Ephraim spoke piety, He was exalted in Israel; But he incurred guilt through Baal, a Baal I.e., Baal-peor; cf. 9.10. And so he died.
And now they go on sinning; They have made them molten images, Idols, by their skill, from their silver, Wholly the work of artisans. Yet for these they appoint people to sacrifice; b Yet for these they appoint people to sacrifice Meaning of Heb. uncertain. They are wont to kiss calves!
Assuredly, They shall be like morning clouds, Like dew so early gone; Like chaff whirled away from the threshing floor. And like smoke from a lattice.
Only I the E TERNAL One have been your God Ever since the land of Egypt; You have never known a [true] God but Me, You have never had a helper other than Me.
I looked after you in the desert, In a thirsty land.
When they grazed, they were sated; When they were sated, they grew haughty; And so they forgot Me.
So I am become like a lion to them, Like a leopard I lurk on the way;
Like a bear robbed of her young I attack them And rip open the casing of their hearts; I will devour them there like a lion, c I will devour them there like a lion Emendation yields “There dogs shall devour them”; cf. Septuagint. The beasts of the field shall mangle them.
d Meaning of verse uncertain. You are undone, O Israel! You had no help but Me.
Where now is your king? Let him save you! Where are the chieftains in all your towns From whom you demanded: “Give me a king and officers”?
I give you kings in My ire, And take them away in My wrath.
Ephraim’s guilt is bound up, His sin is stored away. e stored away For future retribution.
Pangs of childbirth assail him, And the babe is not wise— For this is no time to survive At the birthstool of babes. f And the babe … birthstool of babes Meaning of Heb. uncertain.
g This verse would read well before 14.5. From Sheol itself I will save them, Redeem them from very Death. Where, O Death, are your plagues? Your pestilence where, O Sheol? Revenge shall be far from My thoughts. h Revenge shall be far from My thoughts Lit. “Satisfaction (for this meaning of nḥm see Deut. 32.36; Isa. 1.24) shall be hidden from My eyes.”
For though he flourish among reeds, A blast, a wind of G OD, Shall come blowing up from the wilderness; His fountain shall be parched, His spring dried up. That [wind] shall plunder treasures, Every lovely object.

Chapter 14

Samaria must bear her guilt, For she has defied her God. They shall fall by the sword, Their infants shall be dashed to death, And their women with child ripped open.

Return, O Israel, to the E TERNAL your God, For you have fallen because of your sin.
Take words with you And return to G OD. Say: “Forgive all guilt And accept what is good; Instead of bulls we will pay [The offering of] our lips. a Forgive … lips Meaning of Heb. uncertain.
Assyria shall not save us, No more will we ride on steeds; b No more will we ride on steeds I.e., we will no longer depend on an alliance with Egypt; cf. 2 Kings 18.24 (Isa. 36.9); Isa. 30.16. Nor ever again will we call Our handiwork our god, Since in You alone orphans find pity!” c pity I.e., parental compassion (cf. Ps. 103.13) or legal affiliation (cf. Hos. 2.6, 25).
I will heal their affliction, d affliction For this meaning of meshubah see Jer. 2.19; 3.22. Generously will I take them back in love; For My anger has turned away from them. e them Heb. “him.”
I will be to Israel like dew; He shall blossom like the lily, He shall strike root like a Lebanon tree. f Lebanon tree Emendation yields “poplar.”
His boughs shall spread out far, His beauty shall be like the olive tree’s, His fragrance like that of Lebanon.
They who sit in his shade shall be revived: They shall bring to life new grain, They shall blossom like the vine; His scent shall be like the wine of Lebanon. g Lebanon Emendation yields “Helbon”; cf. Ezek. 27.18.
Ephraim [shall say]: “What more have I to do with idols? When I respond and look to [God], I become like a verdant cypress.” Your fruit is provided by Me. h Your fruit is provided by Me Meaning of Heb. uncertain.
The wise will consider these words, The prudent will take note of them. For the paths of G OD are smooth; The righteous can walk on them, While sinners stumble on them.